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BY

GEORGE LINCOLN WALTON, M.D.

Author of "Why Worry" and "Those Nerves"

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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1913

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FOREWORD

This was a public lecture delivered at the Harvard Medical School, March 16th of this year, under the title, "How to Cultivate Emotional Poise in a Strenuous Age." The title was changed to the present one at the suggestion of the publishers. Their choice seems peculiarly appropriate, since it intimates that the desired accomplishment rests with the reader.

BOSTON, June, 1913.

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THE selection of a title is no trifling matter. Chesterton says he once refrained from calling a work "What is Wrong?" because it was awkward to state that he was doing it! I really wanted to put in something about "fretting the gizzard," a term borrowed from Butler's "Hudibras," and defined in Webster's Dictionary as "to vex one's self." In that case I might have used for a text the lines from "Canterbury Tales": —

And whoso gruccheth ought, he dooth folye,
And rebel is to him that all may gye, —

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which I have ventured to imagine Butler might have translated something like this: —

> Fret not thy gizzard under adverse fates,
> For the fret gizzard incapacitates.

This rather appeals to me, and to prevent gaining credit for a more serious turn of mind than I possess, I hasten to state that it was only outside pressure that prevented my choosing for a title, "The Unfret Gizzard, and How to Achieve It." The title I have selected may suggest to some a journey through life with the placidity of a Venus de Milo, but I fear this would be a little deadly. Indeed, we need not penetrate beyond the opening chapters of Reinach to learn that if Greek art itself "had made no further development after producing the pediments of the Parthenon, it would have been as incomplete

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in its way as that of Assyria or of Egypt." It does not follow, however, that we must play either the festive satyr or the suffering Laocoön to attain that mental attitude which shall render us a comfort to ourselves and to our neighbors. All I really wish to imply by the word poise is equanimity, and the kind of equanimity I have in mind is a purely practical one, such, for example, as will enable us to take a subway car in the Park Street Station during rush hours without losing our temper. Not that I expect any one really to attain this degree of equanimity, but I have carefully limited my title and shall limit myself to such suggestions as may put us in the way of *cultivating* that poise, to the extent, at least, of lessening our fears, of taking the edge off our acute resentments against things and persons,

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of modifying somewhat our impatience, and materially curbing our worry.

What is the practical value of cultivating such a mental attitude? Speaking as a neurologist, it is this: In my belief, nervous prostration would be rare if we were so constituted that we could leave out needless fear and fret, avoid swearing or even feeling like swearing, if we could argue without acrimony, could stifle our aversions, could resist the temptation to play the martyr, and could listen to criticism and ridicule without getting "hot under the collar." And, further, I believe that if such a millennium could be attained, the actual amount of effective work in the world would be easily doubled. Not that people would n't get tired, but it would be a healthy tired, the kind a normal child has after a long day's

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play; not the kind of tired that puts you where you can't sleep if a clock ticks, but the kind that makes you relax every muscle in your body and sleep until the breakfast bell rings, or if you don't sleep, makes you lie still in one position and think what a good time you are having, instead of churning the bedclothes and fussing about that eight hours' sleep on which you had set your mind.

Unfortunately we are not by nature so endowed that we can expect, without effort, to adopt the poise that insures such slumber, nor is it likely that the laws of heredity will be so far subverted that our descendants will be so constituted, unless by infusion of dominant blood of another color than ours.

But there is one thing we can do, and that is by training modify, to a certain

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extent, these faulty mental habits, take the edge off our fret and worry, in short, cultivate emotional poise. For the cure of "nervousness" (which is often only another name for faulty habit of mind) change of scene is often advised, and is, indeed, often essential by way of breaking up the associations under which the faulty mental habits have developed, and by which they are fostered. But one can sit tight wherever he is and materially modify his character, if he is ready to sacrifice his pride to his cure, and if he be sufficiently broad-minded to recognize in this description his own shortcomings as well as those of his neighbor. To such an one, the unfavorable environment becomes merely an obstacle in the game, something to be overcome instead of avoided. And if he succeed in viewing

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with placidity not only the brusque affront, but the sly criticism, the covert glance, and the daily reminder of his asininity, he will be repaid by an accession of self-respect which may even carry with it the respect of his own family; and that is "going some."

Is it not worth while to try and approximate, if we cannot hope to attain, the ideal of fretless, fussless, and unworrying poise? A friend to whom I recently propounded this question promptly answered, "No. If everybody was like that it would be a very tiresome world." But I have a fancy that if such equanimity could be achieved there would still be enough variety left in life to make up for missing the fun of being timid and of getting mad.

Another friend says that nervous pros-

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tration could not be so easily disposed of. He says he frets because he is tired. In point of fact, I think the principal reason he gets so tired is because he frets. But I did not tell him so for fear of an explosion. The effect of psychotherapy on the man who is not anxious to be psychotherapied is like that of water on parched earth. If you let it lie it may percolate, but there is no use trying to rub it in! And even suppose a person is tired, much of the consequent fret is a mere obsession, or fixed idea. What I mean is this: The association "tired and cross" has become so fixed in our minds that to separate them would do violence to our ideas of the proprieties. But just try the experiment once, as I have elsewhere suggested, of going home after a hard day's work, saying to yourself, "Why

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tired and cross; why not tired and good-natured?" You will find it a good deal easier than you think to carry out the suggestion, and the chances are you will give your family a surprise party. Or better yet, at the outset of your day, try this experiment: Start out with the determination that you will do each piece of work in its turn without unnecessary fret, without burdening your mind with such questions as whether So-and-So will keep his appointment, whether So-and-So will pay his bill, whether So-and-So will understand your motives, and whether your business is all gone and will never come back again for the thousandth time. Try the experiment of limiting your thoughts to the task in hand, dismissing the one just finished and leaving the next one to take its turn. When you have

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entrusted some one else with a part of your work, dismiss that part from your mind and, most important of all, hold yourself in readiness to react comfortably instead of irritably to the ordinary incidents of life. If you succeed in doing this you will be surprised to find yourself comparatively fresh at the end of a hard day's work, and I venture to predict, meantime, that your affairs will not suffer.

This sort of training is by nature easier for some than for others. There are sweet-apple trees and sour-apple trees. If we happen to be a sour-apple tree it will take considerable pruning and grafting of ourself to produce the kind of fruit I have in mind. But if we succeed we shall be better than he who taketh a city; in any event the net result will mean

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progress. It is greatly to a man's credit if he can accumulate wealth without capital to start with; the same is true of good spirits; they are like lost spectacles — it is hard to find them without them.

The mental attitude can be greatly modified by suggestion, a branch of treatment which has been made an important adjunct in modern psychotherapy. In attacking faulty mental habits it is the most potent agent at our command. There is nothing occult in the practical employment of psychotherapy, which is just now basking in the simultaneous searchlights of religion, science, and popular interest. It is really no new thing. Already in the time of Charlemagne the influence of the mind upon the body was made of paramount importance at the

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University of Salerno. The drug was then so little understood that the Osler of his day inquired

Cur moritus, cui crescit Salvia in horto?
(How can a man die with salvia in his yard?)

Nor was the value of suggestion unknown in earlier times and more distant lands, as witness the advice of Lao Tzŭ, who urged his fellow mortals to guard their vitality by entering into harmony with their environment (Giles, "Chinese Literature"). To learn to live without tumult is the best training for the fulfillment of the wish of Cicero —

Aequo animo paratoque moriar.
(May I die with mind prepared and tranquil.)

Although it may disappoint the yearning for completeness peculiar to the sufferer from the nervous temperament, let it be fairly understood that one never

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graduates from this school — he must choose between perpetual vigilance and ignominious defeat. Nor is this so sad an outlook as it seems, for once the ambition is aroused, there is infinite pleasure in training the mind as well as the body, in becoming a master instead of a slave.

The business man of to-day is making use of psychotherapy when he hangs signs in his office bearing such legends as "Do it now," "Keep busy to keep happy." The Elm Tree Press is doing the same by publishing such suggestions as "Cheer up, the less you have the more there is to get"; and "When you are down in the mouth, think of Jonah — he came out all right." Perhaps Bacon forecasted such lore when he said, "For there be many precepts of the wise ordering the exercises of the mind as there is

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of ordering the exercises of the body." Conan Doyle even suggests that we shall sometime everywhere meet inspiring texts "engraved on appropriate places, and our progress through the streets will be brightened and ennobled by one continual series of beautiful mental impulses and images." Whether this would accomplish the desired end I am not sure, nor am I quite ready to double the scenery between here and Dedham even by the addition of my own wise saws to the roadside literature, thus: "Use Mennen's Face Powder." "Never touched me." "Drink Harvard Beer." "Take it easy; nothing is as important as you think it is." "Burroughs' Rustless Screens keep out flies." "These are the annoyances incident to my business," etc.

Marcus Aurelius practiced psycho-

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therapy in the more pretentious and stilted style appropriate, perhaps, to his time and station. From this philosopher-emperor each of us will do well to absorb the following quotation: "Begin the morning by saying to yourself, I shall meet with the busybody, the ungrateful, arrogant, deceitful, envious, unsocial. All these things happen to them by reason of their ignorance of what is good and evil." Why should we not be prepared, then, beforehand, to view all these people with pity instead of resentment? Their attitude toward us and their abuse of us has really nothing to do with us, but means merely an exploitation of their peculiarities. To prepare ourselves in this way to meet ridicule, abuse, and the like means no more than for a sailor to be ready to put down the helm in a squall.

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If we should set about learning to sail a boat, this is one of the first things we should do, but we pay very little attention to learning how to run ourselves. On this point Epictetus says, "Cease to make yourselves slaves. Is there not some advantage to be gained from this man? From all: even a reviler. Does not the wrestler gain advantage from him with whom he exercises before the combat? The greatest. And just in the same manner I can exercise myself with this man — and the heavier he is the better for me; and it is surely an advantage to me when I am exercised in gentleness of temper. This is knowing how to gain an advantage from men."

The brief maxim should be constantly at command to clench such suggestions. I will cite two or three which I have

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prepared for my own use and some of which I have elsewhere published. They lack the stately phraseology of the ancient philosophers; indeed, some of them smack of slang; but they help me just the same, perhaps more, and others tell me they have helped them, too. The one I most frequently use is this: "These are the annoyances incident to my business. To fret when they occur means that I cannot manage my business without friction." Another is this (for use when subordinates show stupidity), "If he had my brains he'd have my job"; and finally (as a shield against everyday annoyances and resentments), "Never touched me." I can think of no better illustration of the way such maxims should be ready for immediate use than the following instance, in which the laugh, by the way, was on

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me. I was walking with a friend one day when an automobile came up behind us, announcing its approach by one of those peculiar notes so far from the honk of a self-respecting goose that it can be described neither as a groan, grunt, growl, nor scream, but rather as possessing the discordant elements of all four. "Don't you hate those freak horns!" I exclaimed, rather petulantly, I fear, for an apostle of the emotional poise. "I used to," he said, "but since reading your book I say to myself, 'Never touched me!'"

This incident marks the progress respectively of my friend and myself in mental training. For I have no hesitation in presenting myself, not as a past-master, but rather as a student-instructor in this branch of practical philosophy.

Having given an idea of what I mean

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to include under emotional poise and its cultivation, it now seems appropriate to consider what is meant by speaking of this as a strenuous age; in other words, what is the peculiar strenuosity of this age, and how does it differ from that of other ages. We neurologists are often asked whether nervousness and insanity are not steadily increasing as the result of the greater demand civilization makes upon the nervous system, the idea being that there is a steady and permanent advance in civilization. But if they were so increasing, the increase would be self-limiting if we may accept the teaching, for example, of Brooks Adams,[1] who assures us that civilization is a recurrent phenomenon, and that after ripening

[1] *The Law of Civilization and Decay.* The Macmillan Company, 1910.

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it is doomed to decay like any other fruit. Petrie [1] is even more exact, and describes eight distinct civilized epochs, the eighth of which, he says, we are now passing through. The seventh was ushered in with Praxiteles and died with the fall of the Roman Empire, the sixth was flourishing in the time of Rameses and the Exodus, and so backwards into the remotest past, our knowledge of the earlier epochs becoming less and less well-defined. Petrie goes even so far as to demonstrate a regular order in the development of a civilized epoch, the rise being first apparent in sculpture, then in literature, then in the development of natural resources, and finally, in the vast accumulation of wealth which means eventual collapse.

[1] *The Revolutions of Civilization*. Harper & Bros., 1911.

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If we accept the view of such students (and the worrier may do so without immediate anxiety, since, even if we take Petrie literally, we are still several centuries to the good), we shall realize that while no age is free from stress, the kind of stress will vary greatly from time to time. The stress of our time and the way we react to it will naturally resemble the stress and the reaction found at the height of other civilized epochs. In studying this stress we may disregard the exigencies of war, pestilence, and pillage. Fortunately we are not called upon at present to cultivate emotional poise under the stress of rapine and torture. To this problem, therefore, I shall not apply myself to-day. Our aim is to cultivate emotional poise in the struggle for survival in a battle of wit and wile rather than of

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pike and pistol; our concern is not so much for our physical safety as for our morals, our manners, our ideals, our social, business, or professional standing, and, with most of us, I fear, with the question whether we are getting and holding our share of that enormous wealth which, it seems, foretells the doom of civilization.

Adams compares the kind of man who is dominant in the building of a civilized epoch with the one who enters life when that epoch is well advanced. The civilization *builder* is forceful, self-reliant, courageous, one of the kind to dominate conditions and force fate. The successful type *resulting from* this civilization is the kind that can accommodate itself to conditions and make the most of what fate offers. It is essentially in this age that discretion is the better part of valor. The

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man who exercises this discretion presents a better life risk, but he does not see so much of life as the more forceful individual; it is true that the hypochondriac is prone to live forever, but what a life! Time and again, in taking the history of a querulous, fussy, self-centred, timid, and worrying individual, when I try to learn the makeup of his parents, I get some such answer as this: "Oh, they were all right; they lived to be over ninety." Inquiry often reveals the fact that the reason they lived so long was that their chief care in life was taking care of themselves, that they were the kind to study the heavens before taking a trip to Salem! The time is past when the occupant of the crib can say, "And if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take"; his plaint is rather more

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like this: "Don't even mention death to me or I shall lie awake all night!" I have forgotten whom to credit with the observation that the present generation is the gelatinous product of albuminous parentage!

The present, then, is the age, and our contemporaries are the people, that bring into prominence the little worries, that cause the tempest in the teapot, that bring about the worship of the intangible, and the magnification of the unessential. If we had lived in another epoch we might have dreamt of the eternal happiness of saving our neck, but in this one we fret because our collar does not fit it, and because the button that holds the collar has rolled under the bureau.

The ancient worry for the safety of life and limb may even be replaced by such

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intangible fears as that of the lady who once consulted me because she was worried lest she should not succeed in getting into unity with the creative principle. As an example of a more tangible, but equally remote, contingency, another young woman, some six months ago, under the advice of physicians, allowed her mother to be committed to a hospital for the insane. Notwithstanding professional backing, she feared she had not done right, and the fear had grown upon her to such a degree that it dominated her whole life. She was unfitted alike for work and for relaxation; she could no longer attend to her ordinary duties or social obligations. In attempting to point out to her the unreasonableness of her attitude, I told her that, instead of allowing her mind to dwell entirely upon

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this subject, she should bring herself to think of the worse calamities she might have experienced, upon which she asserted that she had reached the limit, and asked what could be worse. I answered to have sent her father as well as her mother to the hospital, but the opposite effect was produced from what I had intended. Her state of passive melancholy was now replaced by one of agitated solicitude. She begged me to assure her that this was not probable, and said that I had now laid the last burden upon her back, that the worry with which she came into my office was nothing compared with the anguish of mind with which she would go out!

As an illustration of the parallel stress in the latter part of Petrie's seventh epoch, we find Ebers (in the "Emperor") de-

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scribing Sabina, wife of Hadrian, who ruled when the Empire was at the height of the rise which, according to Petrie, forecasted its later fall. Sabina was so sensitive, it seems, that loud voices hurt her and a clear voice caused her misery. When she was present in the assembly room, no one might speak aloud. Unable to bear ordinary temperatures, as to stand ordinary noises, the Empress sat, meantime, wrapped in buffalo robes and silks, her conversation limited to complaints of the intolerable heat and the bitter cold of Egypt. She had the doors counted in her rooms at the palace, and found there were five-and-thirty, which doubled her distress, and to the prefect who suggested curtains, "'Oh! never mind; a few miseries more or less in my life do not matter. Sit a little farther off,' said Sabina, press-

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ing her jewelled right hand on her ear as if she were suffering pain in it."

It would appear that Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus were forced to the front by the exigence of the age, much as great generals have developed in time of physical strife.

The admonition to bear one another's burdens is often misinterpreted in this age of fret and worry. Some people seem to think they are bearing one another's burdens when all they are doing is worrying about them. I was recently consulted by a wealthy man, forced by his business to live in an unsavory town, unsavory, at least, in comparison with that from which his wife had been transplanted. He had furnished her every luxury at home and abroad, but still, he felt, she was unhappy. This rankled. His one

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aim and hope in life, he said, had been to make her perfectly happy. Indeed, this desire had assumed the proportions of an obsession, a fixed idea, and the impossibility of its accomplishment was to him a veritable thorn in the flesh. Emotional poise, in his case, was out of the question with a weight like this thrown into one side of the balance.

Here is a suggestive instance of the kind of strenuous age this is, an age in which we manufacture much of our own stress as we go along.

What did this mental sufferer need to restore his equipoise? Merely a little philosophy. He only needed to reason with himself something like this: It is futile to try to make any one perfectly happy. Burdens only strengthen; this burden, after all not a very onerous one,

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is my wife's, not mine; and wives have carried worse burdens than this and yet survived. Finally, a glum face on my part, far from lightening her burden, only makes it heavier, if she is at all sensitive to environmental influence.

I know at least one family in which most of the members make themselves thus miserable by fretting over each other's troubles. Every member is perfectly able to bear his own, and if each would limit his task to carrying his own, peace and happiness, not turmoil, would obtain. But some overconscientious people are afraid to be happy.

The principal depressing emotions we have to curb to preserve our equipoise are anger and fear. And under anger we must include the moderate degree of anger

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known as fret. What makes us fret? We all know the expression "Mad as a wet hen." Suppose you were asked what makes the hen mad, you probably would answer, "Why, because she is wet"; but for the real reason we must go further back — she is mad because she insists upon being dry. If she could forego that insistence she would remain unruffled, wet as well as dry. Similarly, I think I am mad because So-and-So has called me a liar, a coward, or a what-not. But the underlying cause of my anger is that I can't stand being called such names. If I took a notion to practice philosophy to the extent of seeing how much instead of how little I could stand, I might finally be wishing some one would try it on, to see if I could n't remain cool under the provocation, and simply say to myself,

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"Never touched me." "Any one can stand what he likes; it takes the philosopher to stand what he does n't like."

There is no sharp line of division between the legitimate airing of a grievance and going into a state of fret. Nor is it fretting quietly to go about the adjustment of the grievance. Fret means internal turmoil externalized, not by effective work, but by wailing and gnashing of teeth.

If I were obliged to indicate some one sign of fret, I should choose the voice. This test is not infallible, but as a rule you can tell the fretter by his voice as surely as you can tell the state of a dog's mind by the way he wags his tail. If one is frightened, he speaks in gasps. Pity and sorrow produce equally characteristic interference with the tone and timbre of

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the voice. Such changes are neither obnoxious to the listener nor injurious to the speaker, but if he lets his passions rise he tightens his vocal cords, and produces a high-pitched, disagreeable tone which merges into the whine of chronic discontent.

Just such a high-pitched voice I heard inquiring of the waiter one morning at breakfast, "How many eggs are there in this bacon and eggs?" "I don't know, sir, I think two—that is the usual number." "Well, I wish you would go and see"; and this the waiter did, returning shortly to announce with beaming face, "There are three, sir; they generally put in two, but this time they put in three." But even this cheerful news produced no change in the expression or the voice of the querulent, who despondently ob-

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served, "I knew the proportions were wrong."

If you ever find yourself getting into this state of mind try the experiment of saying to yourself, "Don't pitch your voice so high!"

I once knew a man who had the city dust on his mind, to such a degree that though he did n't even bestir himself to write a letter to the "Transcript," almost everything he said included it. If you inquired about his health, he would answer, "Pretty bad, thank you, and the dust is something awful!" If you admired a picture, he would say, "The composition may be good, but the frame is the kind that catches the dust." If you mentioned the Arctic regions, he would wish himself there to be out of the dust. When we finally had a fall of snow that covered the

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dust, I expected to find him beaming, but no — with the same tried expression and the same high-pitched voice he said the dust would be as bad as ever in a little while.

It is surprising how many things we can't stand if we cultivate our "cantstand-ability."

The degree of anger known as getting mad may be dismissed with an appeal to our vanity, thus: Consider the very angry woman. How unbecoming it is — how it lacks in dignity! Why, she is almost black in the face. This is because her emotion interferes with her circulation, and causes a stasis of venous blood in the superficial vessels of her countenance! If she could look in the glass now, and if she knew enough physiology to realize that controlling the emotions also con-

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trols the circulation, she would wish never to be angry again. It is worth while for us to profit by this observation; and if it chances that we are the object of her wrath, we shall do well to curb the natural reflex which will make our face as black as hers, and we shall maintain the rôle of spectator, disinterested and unturgid.

When real improvement has taken place in these directions there is not only a change in the manner of thinking, but a noticeable change of personality, which includes control of the body likewise; indeed, to control the body or mind alone is to manage only one horse of a team.

We come now to the second of the depressing emotions to be inhibited, as far as possible, in the cultivation of equanimity, namely, fear. I do not mean for a moment to preclude normal and legitimate

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fear. This is one of the means which nature has given us for protection in time of danger, but we seem to be so constituted that the further removed we are from actual danger the more we cultivate our fears. The safer we are the more the obsession grows upon us to make ourselves absolutely safe, not only from real but from prospective and imaginary dangers. As Burns puts it in "Twa Dogs,"—

> The less we hae to hurt us
> The lesser things will sturt us.

As an example of the real but extremely remote dangers that obsess us, it is not so very rare to find persons who fear to sit in the theatre, to enter an elevator, to ride on an elevated train, to mount a height or go through a tunnel. They have become so accustomed to safety that they

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want even more safety. This desire for absolute and unadulterated safety has become a fixed idea that dominates their life. Such persons are unfitted by their exaggerated fears to carry out the duties and enjoy the pleasures of life in the way other people do.

Again, it is still more common to find individuals unduly solicitous and timid regarding their health. Such persons will don the overcoat to mail a letter, will avoid touching doorknobs and handling money, and may even wear an aspirator for fear of infection. Here, again, we have to do with dangers that are potentially real, but so remote that in the long run the fear does more harm than the danger. I need go no further with the list, which is so extensive as finally to include dangers that are purely fanciful. Most of us

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know these fears to a greater or less degree, but we hesitate to acknowledge it even to ourselves. If we are afraid of a thunderstorm, we are very apt to tell ourselves and others that we are not really afraid, but that electricity has a peculiar physical effect upon us. That effect, when we come to analyze it, is something so closely allied to Crile's description of fear that it seems appropriate to insert it:

> Palpitation of the heart, alteration and quickening of the breathing, and a disturbance of the rhythm, cold sweat, rise in body temperature, tremor, suspension of digestion, muscular relaxation, staring of the eyes.

In this state he says,

> the function of the brain is wholly suspended, except that which relates to protection against the object feared. It is clear that under the influence of fear the organs of the body are divided sharply into two classes — those that are stimulated and those that are inhibited.

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> The entire muscular system is stimulated; so also are the nerve systems which cause movement, the mechanism for erecting the hair, the respiration, the sweat glands — and, it is found, the thyroid gland and the adrenal gland. On the other hand, the entire digestive functions are paralyzed.

Here we have an authoritative statement regarding the bad physical results of faulty mental habits. Does it pay constantly to paralyze the digestive function by needless fears? And have we not here a physical basis for nervous prostration started by a purely mental process? This is the sort of thing I meant in speaking of the fear as doing more harm than the danger.

The hypochondriac (who may be defined as one unduly interested in, and anxious about, his own physical or mental state) thus by his fears paralyzes

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his digestion a dozen times a day. The thought that he may have eaten something indigestible starts the cold sweat and stops the stomach. The fear of touching something infectious inhibits every other thought and puts him *hors de combat*—a draft of air on his body or a suggestion of dampness to his feet may be enough to cause profound collapse. My friend, Dr. W. H. Smith, tells me that he is in the habit of reminding such patients that they die several times a week when they need die only once in a lifetime!

Effort is wasted by amateur mental healers in trying to convince timorous people that their fears are groundless. Such efforts only incite the sufferer to controvert the proposition and still further to magnify the danger. Tell a woman afraid of thunderstorms that thunder-

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storms are not dangerous, and the chances are she will overwhelm you with newspaper clippings relating deaths by lightning. The situation should be fairly met, not juggled with by subterfuge and insincerity. The fearful one should not be encouraged in his quest for absolute safety, but should rather be stimulated to add a cubit to his spiritual stature, to realize that life is full of dangers to be faced, not run away from, that danger is a feature of the game of life, which constantly to shirk is not to play the game.

Psychotherapy is not so rich in maxims regarding fears as in those regarding fret and worry, nor is the literature on this subject so abundant. For ready use when the hypochondriac fears disease, or when the timorous one is going through a tunnel, I recommend, the following: "Play the

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game, you 'll never be quite safe till you 're dead!" Try this maxim the next time you are tempted to give up a trip for fear of a blizzard, and you will realize that you have been missing much experience by taking too good care of yourself.

Lest my lecture seems to favor indulgence in introspection and reflection at the expense of action, I take this opportunity to state my conviction that, for preserving emotional poise under stress, contemplation without action is of no avail, that nothing helps us better to keep our head than to use our hands, and that, for the treatment of faulty mental habits, for foolish fears and needless worry, nothing is more effective than the "steady job." In point of fact, the maxims that have helped me most are these: "Play ball," "Get busy," and "Saw wood!"

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Our time is too short to consider the other ways in which emotional poise may be upset besides through fear and anger. We might have devoted an equal amount of attention to such faulty mental habits as *harboring the grudge, dwelling in the past, playing the martyr,* and the like. But once our attention is called to this line of thought, and once we are started on this line of training, the rest follows of itself.

The chief obstacle to our mental training is our own attitude. We would be glad to attain the poise, but we are unwilling to take the trouble and to make the sacrifice. For example, our pet aversion is baked beans, and our favorite bugaboo is death. Theoretically, we are willing to undergo any sacrifice, but eat baked beans we will not, and calmly contemplate our own de-

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mise we cannot. There we draw the line. Very well, in this event the only kind of stress under which we are likely to gain emotional poise is under the stress of having everything our own way. Under these circumstances neither this nor any other kind of training will avail. We have not even made the preliminary step of altering our ideal. If we really mean business, we must first learn not to say "That is enough to vex a saint," but "Nothing is enough to vex a philosopher." With this for our goal, and a genuine desire to reach it for our ambition, we are already well upon our way.

By such commonplace, and, I hope, common-sense methods as I have suggested, we may all gain something; some may perhaps even learn to follow the injunction of Horace: "Keep an even mind

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in adversity, and in prosperity show no overweening joy."

The good Emperor Antoninus Pius used to say that he preferred repairing the monuments of others to erecting new ones of his own. But to my mind he left the most effective of them all, when, after composing himself for his last sleep, he gave to a servant the watchword he had chosen for the night:—

"Equanimity."

THE END

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